

Tata's keen on ties with cos in Lusophone countries

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PANAJI: The Tata group would be very happy to work with companies in Portuguese speaking countries, said Syamal Gupta, special advisor, Tata International Ltd - the trading arm of the group.

Speaking at the 'India and Lusophone Market - International Congress' on Tuesday, Gupta said that he was eager to do business with countries having Portuguese links and willing to listen to concrete proposals for the same. The group, he added, already had trade interests in ex-Portuguese colonies like Brazil, Mozambique, Angola and is keen on expanding its presence in the future.

Going global is one of Tata's strategies in recent years, he said, but without compromising the core value system of "giving back to society." For instance in Africa where the group is present, the local economy has benefitted through training schemes, women empowerment measures and other social activities.

Known to be a part of the higher echelons of one of India's oldest and most reputed business house, Gupta added that he had come as a special emissary of Noel Tata who is very interested in the Lusophone Congress and who requested him to represent the group. On Tata's presence in the state, Gupta said that they were never interested in the mining industry as it is environmentally damaging. However, the Goa link is very much alive through four-five hotels and auto ancillary company ACGL where it has a stake. Making a special mention of the Honda-based bus-body manufacturer, Gupta said that its progress is keenly followed and that the company exports buses to several countries in the world.

Gupta spoke in the afternoon session. Earlier in the day, the inauguration was by the Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar who spoke very briefly. The Chief Minister said that Portuguese relations with India have received a boost thanks to the forthcoming 2014 Lusofonia Games as well as the ongoing two-day Congress on January 14 and 15.

Keynote speaker Salimo Amad Abdula, president of Business Confederation of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CE-CPLP), Mozambique, pointed out that Lusophone economies at present comprise

four per cent of the global economy. But the percentage share can easily touch a double digit figure through concerted efforts.

Delegates, he explained, are looking at Goa as an entry point to India because of common values shared with the state. Abdula added that India's trade links with Portugal goes centuries back and if language was no barrier to trade in the past there is no reason why it should be a hurdle now.

The Congress is organised by the Lusophone Society of Goa (LSG) in collaboration with CII-Goa. Both Atul Pai Kane and Kirit Maganlal, president and vice-president of CII-Goa, were present on the occasion. Manoj Kamat, special advisor to LSG, was one of the speakers. The welcome address was by Aurobindo Xavier, president, LSG.